

H.B. 5480 – Support with two Improvements

**Government Administration and Elections Committee
Testimony – March 10, 2014**

**Luther Weeks
Luther@CTVotersCount.org
334 Hollister Way West, Glastonbury, CT 06033**

Chairs and members of the Committee, my name is Luther Weeks, Executive Director of CTVotersCount.

I welcome the intentions of H.B. 5480, to make Secretary of the State's declaratory rulings, instructions or opinions enforceable. I have testified for several years in favor of that, especially so that procedures for post-election audits and recanvasses could be standardized and enforced.

It is improved over last year's bill in that it requires all such instructions etc., to be enforceable, to reference the legal authority, putting everyone on notice that they should take care to follow the item.

Yet, I remain reluctant to support the bill without two additional improvements:

First, to be enforceable, that the Secretary of the State's instructions etc. be required to be posted to the Secretary's web site in a timely manner. We now have all regulations online, this would be a consistent, appropriate step.

- In this way all officials would be aware all the instructions etc., even when a directive was issued based on a question by a single official. They could see any contradictions, to have them quickly identified and addressed.**
- The public would also be aware of what to expect from officials and those officials would have a reference to point the public to.**

Second, that Registrars of Voters each provide an email address on their web site and/or the Secretary of the State's web for communication with voters.

- This would greatly facilitate communication from voters and those interesting in registering to vote. It is what voters expect in this day and age. This is how many communicate with other officials, such as members of this General Assembly.**
- Many registrars are very very part time, with as little a one hour a week or even only a single hour a month of posted hours in which they are available in their office for the public.**
- This would be email capability and notice would be especially useful to military and overseas voters.**

I have attached suggested revisions.

Thank you

Suggested revisions to H.B. 5480 (in bold)

...Any such written instruction, **ruling**, or opinion shall be labeled as an instruction or opinion issued pursuant to this section, as applicable, and any such instruction or opinion shall cite any authority that is discussed in such instruction or opinion. **Within two business days from issuance, any such instruction, ruling, or opinion shall be posted on a page or index on the Secretary of the State's web site in a common location with all other instructions and opinions in effect.**

(2) ensure that each registrar of voters may access the Internet and correspond with the Secretary of the State and the public using electronic mail. **Such email address will be posted or accessible via a communication form on the Registrars' web page, if there be any. The Secretary of the State will also post a list of those email addresses on the Secretary's web site, updated within two business days of their receipt.**